

THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE

- 512 pleasure. The diary of at least one young man reads 'Lounged about the place' for the greater part of the time. I give here a few typical examples which will serve to show what the natives do with themselves at times when no special ceremonial or other activities are in progress.

A week from the record of Sobak, an elderly man

- [283] May 11. Sat around on his verandah and on mine, making string for a fishline and chatting.
- May 12. Split a quantity of sago-palm leaves and prepared them for making thatch for his hut, which has remained unfinished since the move from Gomen.
- May 13. Went to do a day's work in the new taro garden.
- May 14. Went to the nearest plantation, some 5 miles off, to sell copra, and was away all day.
- May 15. Stayed about the village doing nothing in particular.
- May 16. Worked at the taro garden.
- [252] May 17. Made ceremonial pudding for his wife to take to Tabut for a feast which she was going to attend.

A week from the record of Matēv, an elderly woman

- May 31. Went to Tarongen with other women to barter with the women from Saposa.
- [231] June 1. Went with some other women to Baniu with a young pig to be brought up there because the food is more plentiful. She carried the pig on her back in a pack. Stayed there the night.
- [482] June 2. Came back from Baniu. Fetched taro for the evening meal.
- June 3. Worked all day in the taro garden.
- [415] June 4. Stayed in the village, spent most of the day cleaning the meat out of a coco-nut shell to make a new water-bottle.
- June 5. Went to Tarongen to barter with the Saposa women.
- June 6. Worked on the government road.

A week from the record of Tahol, young woman with a suckling infant

- May 22. Sat around on her verandah and on mine, playing with her baby.
- May 23. Went to the reef to gather shell-fish, leaving her baby with another woman.
- May 24. About the place most of the day, towards evening went to fetch some bananas from Gomen.
- May 25. Brought over some things from her old hut at Gomen, swept round the hut in which she lives at Kurtatchi, and cut away some bush.

PREGNANCY AND CHILD-BIRTH

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it *asam*, and do not, so far as I know, use it as a contraceptive, but regard it as of virtue in fishing magic (see p. 350). It has a very tough stem, the outer skin of which is used throughout the whole area as a fastening, particularly in the making of canoes. For use as a contraceptive, the procedure is as follows: 842
824
[283]

The woman takes a piece of the root of *asam* and chews it with the betel-mixture. Some of the mixture must be swallowed. Some of it she spits out into the palm of her hand, and with it massages her abdomen thoroughly. The piece of root which remains over must be hung up in the rafters of the hut, where the smoke from the fire will reach it, and left there. As the smoke hardens the root, the woman's belly 'becomes fast', so that she cannot conceive. If it is desired that the sterility be permanent, after the *asam* root has been thoroughly smoked, it is taken down from the rafters and buried. She will then never be able to have any more children. But if it is desired to have a child later, the root is left up in the rafters until such a time as the woman wishes to conceive; it is then taken down and thrown away into swiftly running water, or into the sea. As the current carries it away, 'her belly opens again' so that she can conceive.

One of the three informants—incidentally, all three were men—from whom I obtained this 'prescription' was not aware of any means by which the effect could be counteracted, otherwise the three accounts were similar. Another added that it was sometimes given to a woman by her husband prior to his departure for a long period, and that on his return he would throw away the *asam* that he had left in the rafters, thus removing the bar to conception. A man who gives this medicine to a woman must not go fishing for *mah5* (a small fish, something like a mullet, caught on the open reef) for one or two days afterwards, or the medicine will not work. [226]

Three other plants credited by the people of North Bougainville with contraceptive properties are used in similar fashion:

Paparan (Vitex Lagundi).

Scrape the roots and chew the scrapings with the betel-mixture. The solid part of the mixture must be swallowed, the saliva is spat out on to the hand and rubbed over the abdomen. The rest of the root is then put up in the rafters to harden in the smoke. As the smoke hardens the root, 'the woman's belly dries up', so that she cannot conceive.

Rōwin (a tree, unidentified).

The leaves of this tree must be rubbed well between the hands, water is poured over them and mixed with the sap thus squeezed out. The

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ADOLESCENT BOYS

292 ON approaching any village on the north coast of Bougainville, a stranger will at once be struck by the curious head-gear worn by all the boys, except those who are still mere infants (Pl. 19). This head-gear is called in the Kurtatchi dialect *upi* (Ruri and Munlus dialect *buri*; Sélō dialect *wasobu*; Hahon (mountain) dialect *wasampo*). Its appearance is more easily appreciated from photographs than from any verbal description. To the unaccustomed onlooker, watching it bob up and down as its wearer goes about his work or play, it seems almost incredible that this ungainly object should be worn except for a joke, yet it is probably the most serious and important thing in the whole culture of the area, being associated with an elaborate series of rules and taboos, which profoundly influence the daily life of the people.

824 The *upi* is made of the leaves of a small fan-palm (*Licuala*) which
294 is common in the bush, and is called in the Kurtatchi dialect *win*.
The manufacture is carried out in the *tobar* and is kept secret from the women. The dried and bleached leaves are stretched over a frame made of thin bamboo, the bottom of which is composed of two circles of stiffer cane, not found in the coastal districts but obtained from the mountain people. The leaves are very neatly stitched together with native fibre-string of exceptional fineness. At the present time this is done with needles from the traders' stores, but in the olden days holes through which to thread the string were made with fine thorns or bits of shell rubbed down to a point on the rough surface of a lump of coral. The bottom of the hat is closely bound round with thicker string. The finished *upi*, though clumsy, is much lighter than it appears to be, but considerable practice is necessary before its wearer acquires sufficient skill to keep it in position as he goes about his various occupations.

ORIGIN OF THE UPI

292 The legend of origin, current over the whole area, runs as follows:
773 A woman was walking in the bush when she saw an *urur* wearing an
531 *upi*. The woman looked at the *upi* and liked it very much. She said to

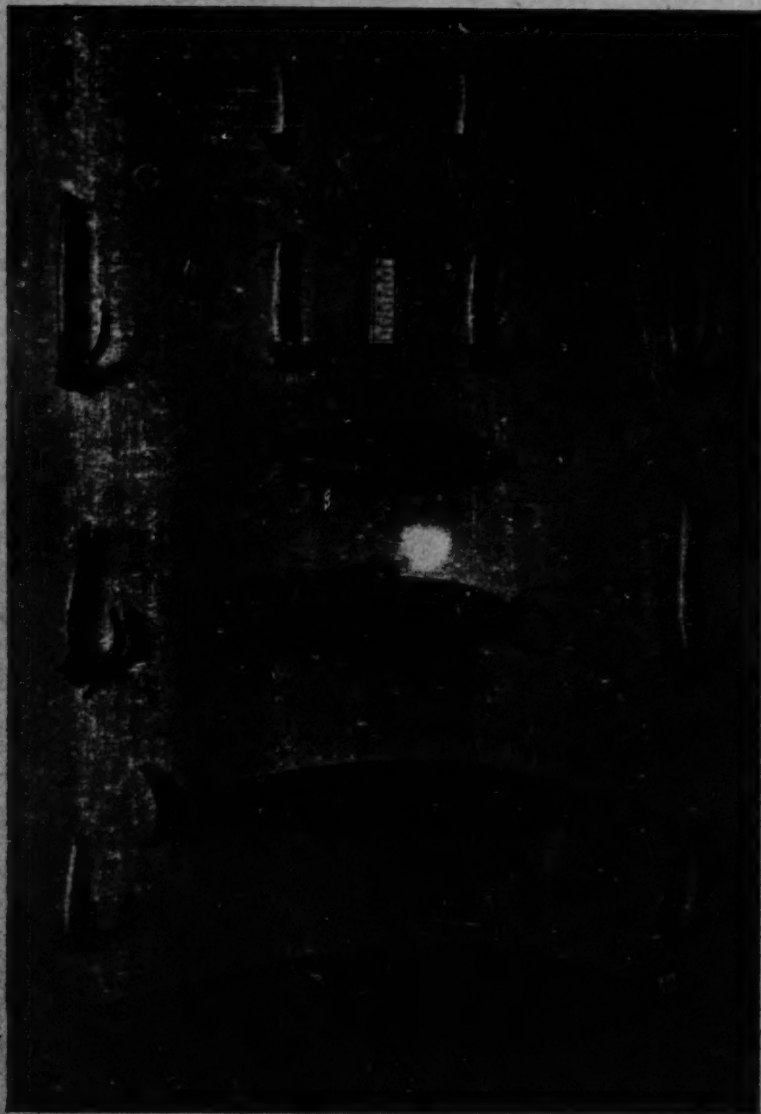
[p. 194]

1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935

ON6 Buka ON6

Kurtatchi

PLATE 42



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283●
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BONITO HOOKS AND MODEL FISH

[facing p. 330]

411 furnished with bone barbs as are the spears formerly used in war, and now kept for ceremonial purposes.

224 When a large number of pigs is required for some feast, a drive is organized in which all the men and boys of the village take part. Even quite little boys will be allowed to join, but the women do not go. [462] 'It isn't women's work', they said when I asked if the women ever helped on these occasions. But, as usual, they made an exception in my favour, so that I am able to give a first-hand description of the procedure.

224 They use a series of long nets, made of heavy string, consisting of a number of fibres of the plant used for string-making twisted together. 286 The form of knot is the same as that used in fishing-nets, but the mesh is very large. ● 283 It is measured round a wooden gauge shaped rather like the business end of a spade. Not every village possesses these nets; those who have none borrow from their neighbours. 224 A narrow path is cleared through the bush to allow of the nets being fixed end to end. About six nets are usually employed, they stretch for a distance of several hundred yards. The nets are pegged down with bits of wood, and kept taut by means of canes and tree stumps. Through the top is threaded a stout cord, carefully fastened to a stump at the end of each section. The height of the net from the ground to this cord is about 3 feet. Men sit or squat at short intervals along the line waiting to catch and tie the legs of any pig that is stopped by the net. Behind the line of nets, at some distance, the rest of the party and all the dogs form a wide semicircle, and gradually close in upon the nets. They shout and slash at the bush with their knives, driving any pigs which may be within the enclosed area up to the nets. Frequently one of the animals breaks through and escapes. This inevitably leads to recriminations among the men watching at the nets, and arguments as to which of them ought to have been brave enough to have prevented this catastrophe by putting his spear through the pig. Wounded boars can be very ferocious, and I have known men to be badly hurt by them. It is said that sometimes men are killed. After each such drive the net is taken up and reset in another place farther on. This process may be repeated many times during a day's hunt.

231 It not infrequently happens that one of the pigs thus caught turns out to be some one's property, since the village pigs have the run of the bush. A domestic pig will be recognized by the

226 are caught, even if only a single one, there is great rejoicing. If the catch is a large one, the fish are shared by all the people of the village; a small catch is distributed among the men who went out; if only one fish is taken it belongs to the owner of the canoe.

The most important place in this region, in connexion with bonito fishing, is the island of Pororan. Men from other parts of Buka and from the north coast of Bougainville go to Pororan to learn the special magic required for it, and it is from there that the stone fish which play an important part in that magic are obtained. The men who were specialists in these matters at Kurtatchi said that they had learnt what they knew from the people of Pororan, who knew much more than they did.

226 Bonito fishing is the work of men exclusively; the women have
462 no part in the catching, but they are permitted to carry home, clean, and cook the fish. The older boys take part in it while still wearing the *upi*, but I did not hear of any ceremony corresponding to the 'making *malaohu*' described by Ivens (1927, pp. 131 ff.) in connexion with a boy's first fishing expedition.

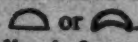
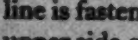
Bonito hook and rod.

227 Bonito are caught with a long flexible rod of bamboo, and a special hook, which is used for no other purpose.

227 This hook (*agats* in the Petats dialect, *kanun* in the Kurtatchi dialect) consists of a shell shank with a point made of turtle-shell.

321 For the shank, *Tridacna* (clam) is generally employed, but *Melae-*
[825] *grina* (the black-lip oyster), *Conus* (the green-snail), *Turbo*, and

Cassis are also used. If made of clam shell, the shank is flattened on the under side, in other cases it may be slightly convex, following the curve of the shell, so that in cross-section it may be either

227  or . The proximal end has a small tang, behind which the

● 283 line is fastened. The line is never, so far as I know, carried along the upper side of the shank and attached near the point, as is described by Hiroa for Samoa (1930, p. 501). The distal end of the shank is cut so as to leave a projecting piece, or sometimes two, on each side; between and on both sides of this is twisted the lashing which secures the point. The lashing consists of native fibre-string, of different thicknesses according to the size of the hook, twisted round both point and shank several times, the arrangement differing considerably in individual specimens, but always very neatly finished. Tiny bits of wood are wedged on either side of

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the point, and the string is twisted round these also, for greater security. 329 227
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The point is made of turtle-shell, generally of the 'green-back' variety, which is not scarce. I do not remember ever having seen a point made of anything else. The variety of shapes and curves can best be seen from the photographs of specimens I collected, but it is not apparent from the photograph (Pl. 42) that there is a series of grooves, three as a rule, on the back of the point near its place of attachment to the shank, round which the lashing is twisted. The hook has no barb. It is pointed out by Hiroa (1930, p. 508) that 'where every second is of importance . . . a barbed hook would be a drawback and not an advantage'.

The hooks vary considerably in size. Plate 42 shows a number of them photographed with a scale. When I asked what was the reason for these differences in size and material, my informants replied that some fishermen liked one kind, some another. No mention was made of choosing hooks of a colour suitable to weather and water conditions, as reported by Hiroa (1930, p. 498) for the Samoans, or that one kind was used in the bow and one in the stern as reported by Ivens for the SE. Solomons (Ivens, 1927, p. 134), so I am able to offer only negative evidence on these points. 227
[171]

One hook from Petats (the middle one on the left in Pl. 42) has a short string of trade beads, probably in place of shell disks, attached to the fastening of the point on either side. The man who brought it said these were to make it catch many fish. He was about to tell me more when another man came up, so he hastily said they were just put on for ornament. But later he came back and told me that when putting the beads on he spat on the hook and said (Petats dialect):

'La hitam, lu hitam, hohauat, lu ien.'

'Catch quickly, catch quickly,

catch fish.'

He could not explain the word *hohauat*, and as he asked me not to tell anybody in the village what the words were, I could not inquire further about it.

The rod is made of bamboo, about 2 inches in diameter at the proximal end, tapering towards the distal end. The length seems to be a matter of individual taste, about 12 feet would be a fair average. The line is the usual fish-line of fibre, and is about the same length as the rod. [224]
[283]

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9. Thorn-lined trap.
10. Stunning and poisoning.
11. Drives.

METHODS USED BY WOMEN ONLY

12. Barricade of leaves.
13. Women's hand-net.
14. Basket.
15. Groping with hand under stones.
16. Collecting shell-fish.

METHODS USED BY BOTH SEXES

C. Freshwater fishing.

17. Hand-net.
18. Dam made of leaves.

METHODS USED BY MEN ONLY

226 A. Open sea and lagoon fishing.

The outrigger canoe is used in these methods, and as a rule the fishermen do not go very far out, preferring the smoother water off the lee shore, though they do, in favourable weather, also venture into the open sea. Women do not take part in these [834] excursions, but there are none of the sexual taboos which are observed in connexion with bonito fishing.

1. Net on frame.

227 The net (*ā bean*, P.; *ēb*, K.¹) is made of native fibre-string. This string is made of the tough fibrous layer underlying the skin of the stem of a running creeper called *karēb*, by rolling on the bare 286 thigh. It must be made in short sections, as the creeper-stem is 283 furnished with a series of nodes at intervals of six or seven inches, [824] at which the fibre breaks off when stripped. The short lengths are joined by twisting the ends between the fingers. For the finer string, two strands of this fibre are sufficient. The action of rolling on the thigh is called *kanun*. This suffices for the finest nets for catching small fish. For lines intended for bonito and for nets for bigger fish several strands are twisted together on the thigh, and three sets of these are rolled (not plaited) over and over each other

¹ P. = Petats dialect, K. = Kurtatchi dialect. The native terms given are in the Kurtatchi dialect unless otherwise specified.

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with one hand while held between the first and second finger of the other. The word for making string by twisting thus is *sē*. The string is made in all the villages of Buka and the north coast of Bougainville. The village of Hanahan has a reputation for making the finest nets. 227
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Both string-making and netting are occupations for men only. In making a net, one end is tied to a pole or some convenient object, often the ridge-pole of a hut; and the netting is done from side to side across the width of the net, with the help of a netting needle consisting of a piece of cane about a foot long, split at both ends. The string is wound round this and the whole needle is pushed through the mesh. A short flat piece of cane is used as a gauge. The knot is similar to that used in our own fishing-nets. [462]

The frame (*étiat*) is of bamboo, a stout cane for the proximal end, with a smaller cane lashed to it at its distal end; this may be followed by a still smaller one, till the required length is obtained. When the net is fixed, the distal end of the frame is pulled over into a curve. The distal end is fixed first, the string at the outer edge of the net being caught in a slit at the end of the frame. The other corners of the net are tied on to the frame (Fig. 13a). In the larger nets a separate piece of bamboo fixed at an angle to the main part of the frame supports the proximal end (Fig. 13b). Some men also make small nets in the same way, and add a handle (Fig. 13c). To fix a net on to the frame is *nui u ēb*. It is done just before starting out on a trip; the nets are then placed in the canoe frame downwards, with the proximal ends protruding from one end of the canoe. On returning, the net is at once removed from the frame and stretched on branches or on the beach to dry; the frame, released from its curve, is put up in the lower branches of a tree. 227
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These nets are used in pairs. They vary greatly in size; a large pair will be as much as a man can lift. I have seen quite young boys using small pairs. The longest net, used for deep-sea fishing, is called *kabir*; many kinds of fish are caught by it. The names of some of them, in the Kurtatchi dialect, are *awnots*, *susui*, *metapusi*, *tamaget*, *nommo*, *mutul*, the last being described as a very large fish (about 4 feet long, as indicated by a gesture) with a square mouth. Another long net is called *kahawi*, and is used especially for catching *bari* (mullet) on the reef. [425]

Fishing with the *ēb* is carried on either by a number of canoes working in conjunction, or by single canoes, in which one man 226

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226 be done just before setting out, fish will come to your canoe. If another canoe comes up to fish near you, it should be rubbed off, then the intruder will not be able to catch any fish. It is used especially in fishing for deep-sea fish, called *gayur*, *malaisa*, *tayini*.

226 *Gotois* (a small tree).

824 Rub the canoe with the leaves of this tree, and then a lot of fish will come to your nets.

Paho (a creeper).

Rub its leaves between your hands. Chew its root with betel-mixture. Rub both on the net. This is especially good for catching the large fish called *mak5*.

Wadodotoo (a large tree, which bears berries much liked by birds).

Chew a piece of a large root with betel-mixture, spit on to your palm and rub on net, then fix a piece of the root on to the net.

226 2. *Troll line*.

A heavy line (*palagon*) is trolled, without a rod, behind a canoe, for catching large deep-sea fish, of several varieties.

226 'Medicine' for catching fish with *palagon*.

824 *Katfian* (tree resembling an areca-palm).

Take the root and some leaves, rub them together in your hands with lime, and rub on to the line. Chew root with betel-mixture, spit on your hands and rub over line. No use for bonito.

3. *Rod and line*.

226 Deep-sea fish are also caught from outrigger canoes by means

227 of a rod (*ara*) of bamboo often in two or more sections lashed

• [283] together, tapering towards the distal end. A strong line is made

[117] by plaiting together four strands of rolled string. Hooks of thorn

439 substituted nowadays, when they can be obtained from planters'

stores. Small fish, or bits of octopus or trepang, are used as bait.

The rod and line is also used by men casting from the edge of the

[26] reef at low tide. (See Fig. 14.) A landing net (*total*) is sometimes

used with it, consisting of a net of heavy string almost circular in

shape, supported on a frame of wood in one piece, a branch with

[415] a suitable fork being chosen. With this there goes a cleaned-out

[624] coco-nut shell to hold the bait. (Pl. 43.)

USEFUL ARTS

294 402

824 occasionally. They are by this time bleached to a pale greenish-grey, which goes yellow with use.

294 In the finished hood, sections of these leaves, left in this state,
386 alternate with sections covered over with the leaves of another plant, coloured red. The dye is made of the roots of the tree *rivo* (*Morinda citrifolia*), which are first washed in the sea, then crushed on a stone, and then boiled. After they have boiled for a long time the water is drained off and the leaves dipped in it. The dye is not permanent, but fades in a few weeks. These leaves are not rolled up like the pandanus leaves, but are folded, and then hung up to dry in the shade.

294 When making the hood a woman starts with one leaf doubled.
[412] Another leaf is then sewn on to one side, and a third to the other side. They now use needles, but formerly made holes with a sharp fragment of shell and threaded the fibre through them. The thread
[283] is made in the same way as a man makes a fish line, by rolling on
824 the thigh. Each worker makes her own as she needs it. It is made from the fibrous inner sheath of the stem of a creeper (*loh* in the Petats dialect, not the same one as is used for making string at Kurtatchi as described on p. 342). The leaves are joined with a running stitch; when it is finished the work is turned over and the join pressed out. When a piece of the required length has been made, it is put aside till another is finished. The two are then fastened together along the two long sides, a piece of thread being laid along the edge of each, and the joining stitches passing over and over it, showing on both sides. Or one length may be made, twice as long as the hood is intended to be, and doubled so that the doubled edge has no sewing. The worker is now handling a flat piece of material consisting of two layers of leaves, sewn together, the whole being about 2 feet broad and varying in length from 2 to 3 feet or more. Some women like their hood to come just over their shoulders, some wear it hanging almost to the ground.

294 The hood is then completed by being doubled and joined at the
531 top with stitches in a wavy line (Pl. 62a). Some women are very skilful in ornamenting the leaves with a pattern of stitches made with flat strips of fibre dyed red and black, but most hoods are left plain, except for the red leaves, which are stitched on over the others when the two layers are joined up.

184 The Petats women make large numbers of these hoods, and
436 trade them to the people of the hill villages of Buka and to the
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The belts made by women during the period of mourning
424 AESTHETIC ARTS for a

- 301 *tsumau* (see Chap. XIV, p. 497, and Pl. 75) have a warp of the fibre
765 growing round the base of the banana palm. The black threads in
565 the web are obtained from the trunk of the bush banana (*wirtsun*);
● 283 white ones consist of the same substance scraped and rubbed with
824 sand. The yellow threads are made from the midrib of the leaves
of a plant called *kiki'ie* (*Cycas* sp.), dyed with *totomoin* (turmeric).
The red threads of the specimen figured (in Pl. 75) were drawn
from the maker's loin-cloth; in the olden days she would have taken
leaves of the plant used in making the red part of the women's
hoods, dyed with *riro* (*Morinda citrifolia*).

Deformation of the Person.

- 304 **Head.** Babies' heads are manipulated at birth and afterwards
for some weeks, by pressing the hands at the back and sides to
make them perpendicular. The effect desired is that which is in-
creased by the method of hair-dressing. At birth it is done by the
old women attending, frequently the grandmother, afterwards by
the mother whenever she thinks of it. There is no 'cradle-board
854 deformation'. Babies are put to sleep on the ground, on a woman's
hood or a plank, but their position is varied, and they do not spend
a great deal of time on their backs, so that no pressure is exercised
in this way. No head-dress or bandage is used on babies. They are
not nursed on the arm persistently enough to influence their head
form at all.

- 304 **Nose.** A baby's nose is pinched soon after birth to make it grow
long. A flat nose is much disliked and is a subject of ridicule. The
septum is pierced at the age of five or six. It is done to children of
both sexes, and is still general. The reason given is that if the
septum is pierced, when the individual dies, the worms will go
through the hole and will not eat the body.¹

- 304 As a rule, a special feast is made on the occasion of the piercing.
852 But if a feast is in progress for some other reason, it will be made
to serve for the piercing as well. Should the village be in mourn-
ing for a *tsumau*, so that no feast is permitted, the operation
may be carried out without one, if the children's parents do not
wish to delay it till the end of the mourning period. The actual

¹ See further discussion in Chap. XIV. For another instance of the connexion
between nose-piercing and the fate of the dead, cf. Codrington (1891, p. 236)
who states that in Florida the ghosts of those whose noses were pierced could
follow the easy path.